

School Board

Administrative Procedure – Reimbursement of Travel, Meal, and Lodging Expenses

I. Overview

The Local Government Travel Expense Control Act (P.A. 99-604) requires all school districts, to adopt regulations governing the reimbursement of all travel, meal, and lodging expenses of Board members and employees, including, but not limited to: (1) the types of official business for which travel, meal, and lodging expenses are allowed; (2) maximum allowable reimbursement for travel, meal, and lodging expenses; and (3) a standardized form for submission of travel, meal, and lodging expenses supported by the minimum documentation required by the Act. These regulations may allow for approval of expenses that exceed the maximum allowable travel, meal, or lodging expenses because of emergency or other extraordinary circumstances.

II. Approval by Roll Call Vote

The Act requires that expenses for travel, meals, and lodging of any member of the Board of Education may only be approved by roll call vote at an open meeting of the Board of Education.

III. Documentation

Public Act 099-0604 requires specific documentation of expenses. All documents and information submitted are public records subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act. Before an expense for travel, meals, or lodging may be approved, the following minimum documentation must first be submitted, in writing using the district Request for Approval of Conference/Workshop form 2:125-E1:

- (1) An estimate of the cost of travel, meals, or lodging if expenses have not been incurred or a receipt of the cost of the travel, meals or lodging if the expenses have already been incurred;
- (2) The name of the individual who received or is requesting travel, meals, or lodging if the expenses have been incurred;
- (3) The job title or office of the individual who received or is requesting the travel, meal, or lodging expense; and
- (4) The date or dates and nature of the official business in which the travel, meal, or lodging expense was or will be expended.

IV. Registration Fees for Conferences and Professional Development

When possible, registration fees for Board members will be paid by the District in advance. Knowing that conference fees are often discounted when submitting a registration request early, Board members are urged to make plans so that all available discounts can be realized. For example, payment of conference registration fees should be submitted via the District's purchase order/requisition process if applicable. The Superintendent or her/his designee may assist Board members with this process.

V. Transportation CostsTravel Requiring a Flight and/or Rental Car

All travel should be selected based on the lowest fare available and not according to the traveler's preferred airline carrier or travel rewards program preferences. Sedan car service / limousine service is not allowed unless it is documented as a less expensive option. Rental car insurance should not be selected as the District's insurance policy covers the Board members and damage expenses. The cost of a taxi/shuttle service from an airport to a hotel will be reimbursed, but Board members should select the least expensive mode of travel.

Coach airfare is preferable. First class and business class travel is prohibited unless an upgrade is made using frequent flyer miles, is free or is less expensive than other travel options, or if warranted by emergency circumstances. Copies of airline tickets must be attached to the expense report. When needed for travel, the least expensive rental car should be selected. It is understood that the rental car size will be determined by the number of travelers. Thus, a mid-size vehicle and/or van may be the most economical option based on the number of Board members traveling. A Board member will be reimbursed for baggage fees.

Rail or Bus Travel

Rail or bus travel shall be reimbursed at actual cost, not to exceed the cost of coach airfare. Copies of tickets will be attached to the expense report to substantiate amounts.

Travel Changes

In the event of travel changes that result in an additional fee, the Board member should include an explanation on the reimbursement form. Travel arrangement changes which result in an additional fee should be carefully considered and have a reasonable explanation. Paying additional fees to take an earlier flight is generally not acceptable.

VI. Lodging

Lodging should be in a safe location, at a reasonable rate, and conveniently located near the location of business (e.g., conference, meeting location, etc.). Reimbursement at a single room rate will be made. If available, the conference rate should be chosen.

Board members will pay personal expenses that are charged to hotel room bills at check-out. If this is not possible, deductions for the charges should be made on the expense report.

VII. Reimbursement of Expenses

All reimbursable expenses must be directly related to or associated with the conduct of District business, are limited to actual and necessary expenses, and must adhere to the guidelines within this administrative procedure. Board members should submit the District's "Out of District Travel and Meal Expense Report Form 2:125-E2" as part of the reimbursement request.

VIII. Meals

Meals are reimbursable as follows. Board members are expected to dine at reasonably priced mid-fare establishments and should exercise professional judgment in this area. On the day of departure and/or the day of return from a trip, a full day's allowance for meals is not always considered reasonable. The time of departure/return and meals provided during transportation are taken into consideration. Alcohol is not a reimbursable expense. Expense reports must include individual receipts with itemized order costs, date, place, and total cost of the meal including tip. A maximum tip of 20% per meal will be reimbursable. Meals for individuals not employed by the District or not on the Board of Education are not reimbursable and must be deducted from meal receipts. Meals will be reimbursed at a reasonable rate consistent with the facility or general location of the meal. The following guidelines should be used when calculating per day meal reimbursement:

- One day conference meal (lunch) rate allotment is \$20.00 unless the meal is included as part of the conference fee.
- Multi-day conference meal rate allotment is \$60.00 per day. Tips shall be included with the meal charges. Expense reports must explain the meal charges incurred.

IX. Mileage

Mileage reimbursement for use of the Board member's personal vehicle is at the current IRS rate plus highway tolls and parking fees. Board members will be reimbursed for mileage from their home to the ultimate destination (e.g., airport, conference location, etc.). Mileage reimbursement will not exceed the cost of commercial coach or single class air fare. Mileage reimbursement for non-conference activities may be reimbursed using the Non-Conference Travel Reimbursement form 2:125-E3.

X. Other Expenses

Valet services should be avoided if at all possible but will be reimbursed as necessary. Internet access fees while traveling are reimbursable, if access is required.

Reasonable tips for bell hops, maid service, and valet services are reimbursable. Reasonable is defined as up to \$2/bag, \$5 per day for maid service, and \$5 per taxi/shuttle ride, respectively.

The following items are not reimbursable:

- Entertainment expenses as defined by Public Act 099-0604 (e.g., shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement) unless ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.
- Childcare
- Pet care
- Purchase of clothing or accessories
- Spa and other personal services such as barber, shoeshine, manicurist
- Fines for parking or other traffic violations
- Rental car insurance
- Maintenance, towing, or repairs to personal vehicles
- Personal grooming items and personal medicines/sundries
- Health club/exercise room fees

- In-room movies, games, and snacks
- Alcohol

Board members should submit reimbursement requests to the Superintendent or her/his designee within 10 days of travel or date of incurring the expense. If a receipt is lost or not readable, efforts should be made to contact the vendor (hotel, restaurant, etc.) to request a copy of the receipt. If a receipt is not submitted, the employee or Board member must clearly document the date, amount, and description of the expense, and reason for submittal without a receipt.

XI. Grant Funded Expenses

If reimbursement is to be provided by grant funding, the grant requirements for reimbursement will supersede these regulations in the event of a conflict or inconsistency between them.

Attached forms:

2:125-E1

2:125-E2

2:125-E3

ADOPTED: April 13, 2017